



**Testimony from Mark C. Lee, MD- Division Head of Orthopedics
at Connecticut Children's Medical Center
to the Children's Committee
Regarding HB 6561 *An Act Establishing a Task Force For the Protection of Youth and
Intramural and Interscholastic Athletes***

February 6, 2023

Senator Maher, Representative Linehan, and members of the legislature's Children's Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding HB 6561- An Act Establishing a Task Force for the Protection of Youth and Intramural and Interscholastic Athletes.

My name is Dr. Mark C. Lee and I serve as the Division Head of Orthopedics at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. I am pleased to support the intent of this legislation. However, I wish to share some additional insights that may help refine the bill language for the benefit of youth athletes and their families.

Before commenting on the bill, I want to provide some background about Connecticut Children's. Connecticut Children's is a nationally recognized, 187-bed not-for-profit children's hospital driving innovation in pediatrics. With over 2,800 employees, more than 1,300 on our medical staff and locations spread across our region, we are Connecticut's only independent children's health system. This means we are the only hospital system in the state dedicated exclusively to caring for children.

As a pediatric orthopedic surgeon, I care for many young patients who have sustained minor-to-significant injuries playing youth sports. Youth sports can be a great way for children to interact with their peers, maintain an active lifestyle, and learn important life skills like team work and perseverance. Despite these positive attributes, we also know that playing sports can sometimes have health and safety risks.

Therefore, I appreciate legislators' intent to establish a task force to study injury prevention practices and safety protocols in youth sports leagues and intramural and interscholastic athletic programs. I think we can all agree that improving children's safety is a laudable and worthwhile goal. I do, however, recommend that the bill language be more specific in lines 19-21 to require that the sports medicine and neuroscience professionals included on this task force have specifically *pediatric* expertise.

At Connecticut Children's, we frequently say that "kids are not little adults." Oftentimes, injuries like broken bones or torn ligaments in children require unique treatment plans that account for their growing and changing bodies. Pediatric clinicians also have a better understanding of what injuries and conditions child athletes may be more susceptible to at different ages and stages of their growth and development. Connecticut Children's would be happy to share its unique pediatric expertise with this potential task force.

I would also like to add that several of my colleagues from the Connecticut Children's Sports Medicine team, who are dual Fellowship trained in Pediatric Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, have asked to join me in supporting this testimony. Please find their signatures below.

Thank you for your consideration of this position. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Emily Boushee (eboushee@connecticutchildrens.org), Government Relations Manager for Connecticut Children's with any questions.

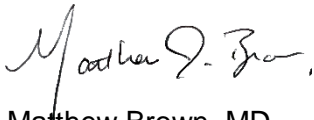
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark C. Lee'.

Mark C. Lee, MD
Division Head, Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, Connecticut Children's

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allison Crepeau'.

Allison Crepeau, MD
Orthopedic Surgeon, Connecticut Children's Sports Medicine Division

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Brown'.

Matthew Brown, MD
Orthopedic Surgeon, Connecticut Children's Sports Medicine Division